

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

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Report Title	Jobs Recovery Reset	
Cabinet Portfolio	Portfolio Lead Member for Economic Growth and Housing Development	
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Wards affected	All	
Public Access	OPEN	
Appendices	Appendix 1 - Equalities Screener	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Connecting people with jobs is one of the four key priorities set out in the Council's Public Service Strategy. This report sets out the vision and programme for a unique and radical Waltham Forest Jobs Recovery Reset.
- 1.2 The Reset responds to the current employment crisis by leveraging our ambitious plans for growth to generate jobs. Targeting efforts to support those residents affected by recent and historic unemployment; it will connect them with opportunities in our businesses and growth sectors. It will provide the employment support needed to participate in the economic recovery.
- 1.3 Enhancing our emerging Jobs Recovery Plan the Reset Programme will create a single front door for residents to access opportunities; harness job partnerships and build community action; introduce Job Creation Academies around our key growth sectors and enable local innovation and enterprise.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the delivery programme of the Waltham Forest Jobs Recovery Plan and Reset which are set out in paragraphs 3.12 – 3.16.
- 2.2 Delegate to the Strategic Director of Economic Growth and Housing Delivery, in consultation with the Strategic Director Finance and

Governance and in accordance with Financial Regulations, authority to submit bids, independently or jointly with the Local London Sub-regional Partnership to National and regional Jobs Recovery programmes.

3. PROPOSALS

BACKGROUND: NATIONAL OUTLOOK

- 3.1 Coronavirus has driven an employment crisis across the UK. Skilled people of all ages have found themselves out of work, and the economic shock of the pandemic is hitting under 25-year-olds hardest.
- 3.2 The Government's furlough scheme has so far prevented a steeper rise in unemployment, however when relief is withdrawn later in September 2021, a further increase is expected. The full impact on those sectors most severely affected by the restrictions (such as retail, hospitality, accommodation, and culture and creative) remain to be seen. For example as the lockdown eases there is now a skills shortage in the hospitality sector.
- 3.3 More recently (August 2021) the Bank of England in its Monetary Policy report expects UK GDP to have returned to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021; a remarkable recovery. Equally, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development says the UK is likely to grow 7.2% in 2021, up from its March projection of 5.1%. This is having a positive impact on unemployment which is currently well below previous estimates. Opening up of the economy and extensions to furloughing have reduced the predicted national level of unemployment with a slight decrease from 4.9% in Q2 to 4.7% in Q3. This is a much more favourable outlook compared to the 7.3% predicted as recently as January. The employment rate has increased by 0.3% to 75.1% showing continued signs of recovery in the labour market (source ONS).

WALTHAM FOREST CHALLENGE

- 3.4 Waltham Forest has a working age population of 186,000, but only 72,000 jobs in the borough. Unemployment is higher than before the pandemic. In July 2021 NOMIS shows that 16,725 residents 16 – 64 (9%) are unemployed, compared with 7.3% across London. A further 13,100 are still on furlough, which is now half of what it was its peak of 26,800 in February 2021. 22,200 residents are receiving Self Employment Income Support. To total circa 30% of the borough's working age population are on some form of income support.
- 3.5 Data shows that the resident groups most affected by the rise in unemployment are young people aged 16-24, Black and Ethnic Minority residents, disabled residents, men, and those who are least qualified.
- 3.6 Before the pandemic Waltham Forest employment rates were relatively high with employment support primarily targeted at the long term unemployed. COVID19 has changed the economic landscape with a sharp drop in available jobs and a greater need to provide training and

upskilling to support residents into different types and sectors of employment. The Council's *Economic Recovery Action Plan* published in June 2020 recognised that businesses need a mix of financial and business support to help them rebuild, recover, and reimagine to future demands as they re-emerge from the impact of COVID19.

- 3.7 In March 2021 Cabinet approved the principles of a *Business Recovery Plan* that sets out how we would support businesses to reopen safely, recover and build back better for the future. In July 2021 Cabinet approved the *Reset: Confidence in our recovery report*. The purpose of this report is to set out the principles of our Jobs Recovery Plan and Reset linking this to our business recovery activities to produce a comprehensive joint Business and Jobs Action plan and approach.

JOBS RECOVERY RESET – OUR VISION

- 3.8 Connecting people with jobs is the top priority for the Council. The Council will mobilise its staff, partners, communities, and volunteers to respond.
- 3.9 An innovative cross Council effort will be required to act directly to create jobs, facilitate, and enable opportunities across the borough and support residents to realise our current ambition to:
- Create and fill 1,000 jobs including 200 apprenticeships
 - Engage 3,500 residents and support 350 of these into secure jobs
 - Develop 450 work placements
 - Enable 300 volunteer and mentoring opportunities
 - Upskill 2,000 learners
- 3.10 Utilising the Council's Reset Agenda and leveraging our ambitious growth plans the Council aims to create these 1000 jobs and apprenticeships opportunities that connect our residents with jobs. We will also support our businesses through recovery and renewal and seek further resource to accelerate the activities listed below.

DELIVERY PROGRAMME

ONE FRONT DOOR

- 3.11 We will develop 'one front door' for residents to connect with jobs, employment support, and skills. A highly visible presence with front-line staff signposting residents to reliable information, advice and guidance. A new digital platform will draw together the employment, business and skills offer from the Council and our partners. This will make it easier to connect with growth sectors, peer support, and a range of local job opportunities, with wraparound support for people and employers.

JOB PARTNERSHIPS

- 3.12 We will leverage our relationships with commercial partners, contractors and developers to secure jobs and opportunities for residents. In March

2021 we launched our Jobs Coalition and we are now working with organisations to sign up to specific pledges to support our residents in return for accessing enhanced support from the Council these include:

- Local employers and business groups
- Growth sector and development partners
- Partners delivering employment support
- Community groups and social enterprises
- Public sector partners
- Higher education and training providers

3.13 In recent years we have had a focus on long term unemployed and economically inactive residents, however now building on our successful Future Creatives and Future Enterprise programme, we will also have a strong focus on young people. Building our partnerships to develop our 16+ Strategy and link Kickstart placements, traineeships, apprenticeship programmes with high quality information, advice, and guidance; including coaching, mentoring and live briefs to ensure young people are equipped to face the world of work.

3.14 The past year has seen inspiring examples of public service from our residents, partners and businesses. We can achieve so much more when we work community groups and volunteers for example supporting 3,400 with food support and vaccinating 112,400 residents. We can build on this momentum and enable people to take part in public service. The Council will harness the energy in our communities, so we continue to come together for the greater good. Volunteers will have the opportunity to support fellow residents in their job-seeking journey by sharing their time and skills.

LOCAL BUSINESS INNOVATORS

3.15 We will develop support for entrepreneurs, new start-ups and existing businesses to nurture, stimulate and share ideas and inspire innovative thinking. We will create a virtual enterprise hub moving to a physical location as the impact of the pandemic and lockdown further eases.

3.16 We will provide a conducive environment for learning and development, collaboration and support, networking and business to business engagement, helping to collectively recover and invest in the future to protect and create jobs and opportunities.

3.17 We will also support residents and businesses to make the digital step change required for them to upskill to access opportunities and reach new markets and improve productivity.

3.18 The local innovation hub will launch in October 2021, based at Leytonstone Library it will support 150 business startups through

workshops/121s, coaching and mentoring with partners the British Library and NatWest Group.

JOBS CREATION ACADEMIES

- 3.19 In line with the Reset programme our major innovation will be the introduction of Jobs Creation Academies, a unique approach focussed across each of our five key growth sectors to upskill and reskill our residents. We will bring together the sector expertise of our job generators: businesses, employers, suppliers, investors and developers and match this with employment support, training providers and enterprise agencies to ensure our businesses can grow and create new opportunities for newly skilled residents to access. Our growth sectors include:

Green Economy

- 3.18.1 Demand for new green measures to tackle the climate emergency and reach zero carbon target by 2030 creates job opportunities. The Government is committing £3 billion nationally to retrofitting, and Waltham Forest has almost 80,000 homes built before energy efficiency requirements. We will create skills needed to support conservation, environment and green construction and enable existing businesses to play their role in sustainability and supporting new businesses to start-up and thrive in the sector.
- 3.18.2 Waltham Forest Services Ltd is to be commissioned to be the employer of choice in order to support our target of apprenticeships. They will support and develop the talent pipeline demanded for jobs including environmental improvements, retrofit and hospitality. We will source local residents wanting to upskill/reskill and move into this vital growth sector. The Green Energy Skills and Training Alliance (GESTA) will deliver critical green energy training to residents, including ground and air source heat pump technology, crucially linked to demand from employers needing qualified staff.

Creative and Tech

- 3.18.3 The widening digital talent gap must be addressed to accelerate technology adoption, drive UK productivity and enhance competitiveness by increasing access to tech careers and fostering new talent pathways. Microsoft anticipate the need for more than three million skilled people in UK technology careers over the next five years.

3.18.4 The newly accredited Creative Enterprise Zone in Blackhorse Lane is a rich and varied creative ecosystem attracting local creative enterprises, freelancers and makers and will facilitate and grow skills pipelines. The creative academy will identify the skills requirements of local creatives and work alongside them to employ residents into suitable roles, offering training where required, and prepare them for the broad range of skills needed to be successful in the industry. It will address disadvantage and inclusion within the sector, strengthen networks, increase diversity of job roles, and support the development of more affordable workspace, whilst attracting businesses that pay at least the London Living Wage.

Cultural and High Streets

3.18.5 We will restore confidence in our High Streets and deliver ambitious plans to re-shape them, creating 15-minute neighbourhoods to reconnect people to their local High Streets. We will curate a programme of culture and animation alongside our cultural assets to realise the opportunity, encouraging people to work locally, activating Council property and empty spaces.

3.18.6 Building on the success of the London Borough of Culture we will secure investment to boost innovative businesses and enable imaginative regeneration projects. For example, the development of The Soho Theatre Walthamstow into a performance venue will bring a unique opportunity to grow the borough's culture, hospitality and high streets offer and generate jobs and training for residents.

3.18.7 The Cultural Academy will develop unique opportunities with major cultural anchors such as Soho Theatre, enhancing the borough wide offer. It will offer a wide range of opportunities from set design, to supply chain opportunities to food and beverage, enhancing the Cultural and Hospitality sector and increasing employability skills in the industry to ensure our High Streets offer the best customer experience.

Construction and Built Environment

3.18.8 There are skills shortages throughout the industry as a result of a major recruitment crisis with 168,500 workers needed in the next five years. Locally 10,000 new jobs will be created as a result of 27,000 new homes to be built in the borough over the lifetime of the Local Plan and a £500bn capital programme by Waltham Forest Council.

3.18.9 Key borough assets such as London Academy of Sustainable Construction will support a pipeline of local talent through providing certified Pre Employment Training (including work placements) on local sites, delivering industry standard training

and expanding its curriculum to meet future changes, such as Modern Methods of Construction and digital construction requirements. It will advocate for local people to consider a career change to meet talent shortages within the industry. It will work with local businesses to increase local supply chains and support businesses to retrain to meet the needs of the current and future skills requirements in construction.

Health and Social Care

3.18.10 The pandemic demonstrated the vital importance of health and social care, but it also exposed the skill gaps across the sector. NHS England report a shortage of 100,000 staff and adult social care has 122,000 vacancies.

3.18.11 The redevelopment of Whipps Cross will create a brand-new hospital and jobs linked to the wider health, care and community facilities expected at the site and in the local community. We will collaborate with all our partners to build genuine career pathways into the health and care economy supported by our health and care academy.

3.18.12 We will collaborate with voluntary, private sector and NHS partners across the integrated care system to develop skills and promote the wide range of jobs and careers in the sector.

DELIVERY PROGRAMME ENHANCED OPERATING MODEL

3.19 Since the pandemic the Council's Employment Business and Skills service has been redesigned to creative, agile, and flexible service with a joined-up offer to deliver programmes facilitate a whole Council effort that meet targets outlined in 3.9. This new enhanced operating model includes:

Opportunities Generation

3.20 The new Opportunities team will be an outward looking function to generate, curate and manage a pipeline of job opportunities including those which target young people, whilst supporting employers to recruit and showcase opportunities locally, notably at the upcoming Jobs Festivals that will focus on individual sector opportunities. The first of which is for Hospitality and Culture on 23rd September at Truman's Social Club and the Green Jobs Fair on 15th October at Walthamstow Wetlands (organised by London Wetland Trust). A focused Construction event will take place at LASC in the autumn. Each will include jobs, apprenticeship, Kickstart placements, employer stands, speakers and demonstrations highlighting current career opportunities. The first event will launch the new identity, Waltham Forest for Jobs.

3.21 The new Opportunities function will capitalise on Council status to increase job supply, manage partnerships across the borough and

maximise our use of procurement. This includes a systematic approach to leveraging social value through the Council's role as buyer of products and services for example via the Council's £500m capital programme on major sites such as Fellowship Square and Coronation Square.

Business and Sector Growth

- 3.22 The team will work across the key sectors and businesses through their various life stages to support recovery and growth the team will bring together stakeholders to multiply opportunities by linking together sector, business and enterprise support and skills development.

Flexible Employment Support

- 3.22 This flexible offer for residents who need support will give information advice and guidance, skills and training to enable them to process into jobs in target sectors. The team will have a new focus on newly unemployed 'COVID Cohort' and young people. Residents need help from the start to the end of their journey looking for work – wrap around support will provide them with the help they need with their CV or interviews, ensuring they are ready and able to apply.

Blended learning in the Adult Learning Service

- 3.23 The Adult Learning Service's key target is those residents with no or low skills, in low income households and experiencing deprivation and poverty and badly affected by the economic impact of the pandemic. It is these residents who will need the new skills to compete in the post pandemic job market. To support this over £200,000 of investment in learning technologies has enabled classes to be delivered both in person and remotely and learners to get access to laptops and Wi-Fi when needed. All our courses have digital skills learning built in, this "blended" offer means learning is accessible to more residents in ways that are more convenient to them as they can access learning content and classes online.
- 3.24 Job clubs and fairs bring employers and residents together helping the recruitment process and our basic skills and vocational offer means more people can get the skills they need to get back into and stay in work.

Integrated Programme and Performance Unit

- 3.25 We will create a specialist unit to manage employment, business, and skills workstreams, aligning our model with wider Council relationships and systems. The unit will manage commissioning, funding pipeline and performance monitoring across our integrated delivery model. The unit will be dedicated to process and outcomes evaluation to demonstrate return on investment.

GOVERNANCE

- 3.26 An Economic Recovery Reset Board will be convened in September to oversee and drive the Jobs and Business Recovery Plan and associated Reset priorities.
- 3.27 The Jobs Recovery Plan and Reset will be reported to the Business Recovery Board, chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Housing Delivery, with business leaders and representative organisations from the borough's key employment areas and sectors. This Board is supported by Officers and recommendations from the Board reported to senior Officers and Members.
- 3.28 In addition, sector based workstreams will be convened across each of the five sectors which will bring together business, employers, training and employment providers and the community and voluntary sector.

NEXT STEPS

The preferred approach is to undertake a pilot phase to December to scale up to roll out at speed from the New Year. Key pilot phase activities are:

Action	Date
Economic Recovery Reset Board	Sept 2021
Pilot and Set up Phase launch	Sept 2021
Launch of Waltham Forest for Jobs	Sept 2021
Cultural and Hospitality Jobs Festival	Sept 2021
Jobs Check in and Chat with residents	Oct 2021
Green Jobs Fair	Oct 2021
Publish Jobs and Business Recovery Action Plan	Oct 2021
Launch of Enterprise Innovation Hub (Leytonstone Library)	Oct 2021
Launch Business and Jobs Recovery Action Plan	Oct 2021
Construction Jobs Fair	Nov 2021
Jobs Coalition Job Pledges	Nov 2021

4 OPTIONS & ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The Jobs Recovery Reset is not a statutory document and therefore the Council could choose not to develop its approach to the future of employment for residents and businesses in the borough. However, the need to mitigate the impact of COVID 19 and the rising unemployment levels in London and wider socio-economic impacts, particularly in Waltham Forest requires a strategic and effective response and the development of the Jobs Recovery Reset.

5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES (AND OTHER NATIONAL OR LOCAL POLICIES OR STRATEGIES)

- 5.1 Our Public Service Strategy is at the heart of the borough's response to the COVID19 pandemic, it sets out how we plan to take on the immediate challenges faced by our residents, businesses, and communities. These are captured as four priorities:
- Connecting People with Jobs
 - Safe and Healthy Lives
 - Our 15 Minute Neighbourhood and
 - Confidence in Our Future
- 5.3 The Public Service Strategy has informed the focus on key programmes of delivery in the Council's 'Reset: Confidence in our recovery' programme reported to Cabinet in July 2021. An overarching narrative which validates our priorities and defines their aims; and sets out a plan for how to deliver our strategic activity that will take us into 2022.
- 5.2 In line with the Public Services Strategy and Reset the Council has launched the Waltham Forest For All Campaign which articulates six pledges to residents the first being 'We will do everything we can to help residents find good jobs'. We will deliver radical new ways for residents to gain new skills and get good jobs and ensure that our partners and suppliers are hiring locally.'

6 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Research conducted throughout the pandemic which has informed the Public Services Strategy and Reset priorities has shown that jobs and access to employment opportunities, or routes to retrain for new roles, are at the forefront of our residents' minds.
- 6.2 In January 2021 a resident employment survey was launched which had over 180 responses. In February four focus groups were held aimed at (i) Younger People, (ii) Long-term unemployed, (iii) Under-employed/insecure employment e.g. 0-hour contracts, non-full time, (iv) Those directly affected by COVID 19 e.g. Furloughed, newly unemployed.
- 6.3 In March a Jobs Summit saw over 100 public sector anchor organisations, key Council suppliers, developers, investors, and local businesses launch our new Jobs Coalition and generate employment opportunities for residents.
- 6.4 There were 3 key findings: That jobseekers want support to upskill or reskill; the desire for local opportunities in or near the borough; A better understanding of growing industries or those with skill shortages. This reset plan responds to the demand highlighted by residents and businesses.

7 RESET

7.1 The report requests Cabinet to consider the approach to achieving the council's Reset Priority of "Doing everything we can to help our residents find jobs" as part of its overall Reset Strategy. Cabinet approval will enable the council to implement the "creating a dynamic jobs programme" delivery area which is composed of four themes; One Front Door; Supporting local business, innovators and commercial creators; jobs creation academies; and jobs partnerships.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Finance, Value for Money and Risk

8.1.1 The Jobs Recovery Reset will require a whole Council effort, however, the proposals outlined in this report will predominantly be delivered by the Council's Employment, Business and Skills Service.

8.1.2 The service's business as usual budget is circa £1,348,000 made up from £465,000 general fund, £160,000 Growth pot reserves, c£470,000 s106 employment and training contributions and c£270,000 external funding.

8.1.3 In January 2021 the Council's Return on Investment Board agreed to an additional £490,000 per annum for two years. This combined with the business as usual budget would enable the service to deliver targets outlined in this report under section 3.9

8.1.4 As part of the Council's Reset agenda the Employment Business and Skills service is aligning existing funding and resources to deliver the activities outlined in section 3.11 – 3.18.

8.1.5 As part of the Public Service priorities and Rest Agenda there is an ambition to have a more rapid Corporate approach to connecting people with Jobs and reset funding is being sought to achieve these Corporate priorities. Funding activities outlined in section 3.11 -3.28, that cannot be contained within existing budgets and will be brought back to cabinet for future funding requests, unless additional sources of income are found.

8.1.6 In addition, the service will continue to seek external funding which will enable to increase scalability of delivery to reach more businesses and residents or to develop projects aimed at targeted residents groups who have specific barriers to gaining employment. Current bid proposals include:

- Department of Work and Pensions Community Fund - £300,000 secured for support for disadvantaged young people, BAME and other disadvantaged adults including ex-offenders
- European Social Fund – £400,000 secured to deliver a Creative Careers Cluster
- European Social Fund – Bid submitted via Local London Sub-regional partnership for £500,000 to support residents into work.
- MHCLG Connecting Communities – Currently scoping a £140,000 Digital Skills Employment Programme

- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – EU replacement fund, due to be launched in 2022.
- London Mayor’s academies bid - September 2021

8.2 Legal

8.2.1 The recommendations of this report do not give rise to any specific legal implications. Where under this programme the Council enters into agreements with external parties the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules must be complied with. Where the Council successfully bids for external funding the Council will need to comply with the terms and conditions that apply to that funding and enter into the necessary legal agreements with the funders.

8.3 Equalities and Diversity

8.3.1 An equality impact assessment has been undertaken to support this Cabinet report – please see Appendix 1. A full EA screening is not required as the proposed programme is not expected to adversely impact any of the protected groups.

8.3.2 The Job Recovery Reset is designed to positively impact on the diverse communities of the borough and to enable access to opportunities for sustainable payment at London Living Wage in sectors where we know there is potential for quality employment. This will be achieved specifically designing programmes that enable individuals or communities, especially those with a protected characteristic, to overcome barriers experienced.

8.3.3 Research is emerging regarding those hardest hit by unemployment in the pandemic that the Jobs Recovery Reset will tackle:

- The 16-24 age group is forecast to be hardest hit by job losses, making up around a third of unemployed Londoners. At peak it is expected there could be between 7,900 – 11,600 residents aged 16- 24 who are unemployed in Waltham Forest.
- Londoners with fewer qualifications (i.e. those with only NVQ1 or NVQ2 levels) are set to experience more than three times the unemployment rate compared to those with more qualifications (NVQ4+).
- 31% of those furloughed are aged 35-49. The older age group (50+) is at most risk of economic scarring.
- Pakistani/Bangladeshi and Black/Black British appear to be the worst hit ethnic groups by COVID-19 impacts so far.

8.4 Sustainability (including climate change, health, crime and disorder)

8.4.1 The Jobs Recovery Reset will contribute towards tackling the Climate Emergency by addressing the potential for employment growth in the green economy as a key area of focus. The Green Skills Academy will bring together the employment and skills training required for jobs in conservation, the environment and construction with sector specific knowledge and opportunities, as core areas of work outlined in the Council’s Climate Emergency Strategy.

8.4.2 The London Academy of Sustainable Construction deliver training to support the pipeline of construction in the sub region. It focuses on construction and energy retrofit, BIM/digital construction and Modern Methods of Construction which all contribute to increased sustainability in construction. The Reset will take a proactive approach to the delivery of sustainability support to businesses in the borough and boost emerging businesses working in the field to start up, thrive and create new jobs in the green economy.

8.4.3 The Health and Social Care Academy will work with Barts/Whipps Cross to deliver training and work opportunities to the health sector, in need of new skilled employees across the sector. It will work cross Council to tackle vacancies in the social care sector, providing high quality care by local residents.

8.5 Council Infrastructure

8.5.1 The Council's Employment, Business and Skills services are currently implementing a reorganisation design to align staff to the new operating model as outlined above. There are no direct accommodation or IT implications

8.6 Brexit

8.6.1 It is estimated that 650,000 EU residents left London in 2020. This is being felt in skills shortage vacancies in the capital as we emerge from local down e.g. in construction and hospitality. It will be key to train remaining residents to take up these roles.

8.6.2 During May 2021 Amsterdam traded more stock than London for the first time. Brexit is likely to have a big impact on financial services with knock on effects to the rest of the capital.

8.6.3 International travel is likely to remain muted during 2021 and this will significantly impact London's overall recovery.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION (as defined by Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

None